



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 3 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
3 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

There have been no further anti-Soviet demonstrations in Prague. Dubcek was clearly alarmed by the one which took place following publication of the uninformative communiqué from Cierna, but his reassuring radio address to the Czech people yesterday has quieted things down at least temporarily.

Yesterday Czech Premier Cernik said that the Bratislava talks which start today will concern "things which unite us," European security--i.e., West Germany--economic cooperation, and Czechoslovakia's future role in the international Communist movement. The Czech people have been promised a report on the meeting by Dubcek as soon as possible after it is over, Saturday night or Sunday.

The status of Soviet forces in the area remains essentially unchanged.

2. South Vietnam

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3. Soviet Union

Soviet spacecraft recovery forces are conducting exercises in the Indian Ocean again. This probably means that an unmanned circumlunar flight has been rescheduled for some time later this month or for September.

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4. Soviet Union - Pakistan

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5. Middle East

Gunnar Jarring is leaving New York next week for more talks with the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli dispute. He will meet first with Abba Eban in London, and then will go to Cairo, where he will formally present the Egyptians with questions posed by the Israelis.

The questions are whether Egypt is prepared to establish a state of peace and incorporate it in a binding agreement, and, assuming a solution, what the nature of future Israeli-Egyptian relations would be. The Egyptians already have the questions and say that they add "nothing new." They do say, however, that they will not be "bashful" in responding and in asking questions of their own.

All in all, Jarring is encouraged that a dialogue may be developing. He believes that the prospects for his new efforts depend on what Eban tells him--particularly about the borders Israel will agree to as part of a settlement.

6. France

Ambassador Lucet, back in Paris on vacation, had an audience with De Gaulle early in the week. Later, in talking with Ambassador Shriver, he portrayed the General as optimistic about Franco-American relations--even passing on the quote that "there are no real problems between France and the US." As for the international monetary question, De Gaulle said France and the US "had differences of opinion only." Lucet described De Gaulle as very relaxed.

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7. Communist China

Mao has issued his strongest statement of the year in an effort to bring the violence under control. Mao says that the people are fed up with the fighting by the rival Red Guard factions. He warns that those who continue to disobey, strike at the army, disrupt communications, kill and burn "must be annihilated."

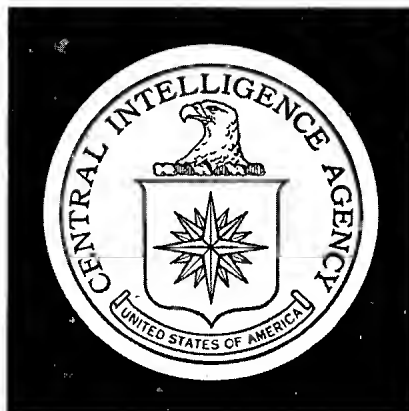
The new statement will almost certainly have an immediate calming effect, but unless further specific orders are issued, its long-range results are likely to be limited. Thus, while Mao at one point calls on all Red Guards to unite, at another point he calls on the militants to continue to "strike out." Ambiguous remarks such as these are good ammunition for any or all sides.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

3 August 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi on Liberation Front: During this week's session of the Paris talks, the Communists went back to their older and tougher language concerning the role of the Liberation Front in a political settlement. Propaganda media since then has reinforced a shift back to the harder line.

Hanoi radio in an English broadcast on 2 August said the Front was the "master of the situation" and, therefore, has a "decisive say in the settlement of the South Vietnam issue." The broadcast went on in even harsher and more uncompromising terms: "There is no other basis for a solution to the South Vietnam problem than the judicious stand of the Front."

Less categorical language has usually been used in recent months.

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Postwar Stance: North Vietnamese spokesmen increasingly make a point of stressing their plans for carving out an independent role for Vietnam in a postwar period, usually by stressing their interest in non-Communist trade. [redacted]

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Reconnaissance Report: Almost no transport activity was noted in high-altitude photography of the panhandle taken last Sunday. The mission, however, was flown in mid-morning when most trucks and watercraft in this area are holed up waiting for darkness.

The mission got pictures of the Vinh airfield where some repair of bomb damage is under way. The main runway still could not be used by MIGs, however.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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